

UK Nerve Agent Attack

We stand in solidarity with our allies and partners and condemn Russia's use of military-grade chemical weapons.

Key Points

- The attack is reprehensible.
- DOD stands by the President Trump's order to expel Russian intelligence officers and close a Russian consulate in Seattle due to its proximity to a U.S. Navy base and aerospace industry facility.
- The United States takes any allegations of chemical weapons use seriously, as those weapons have no place in today's environment.
- The specific and repeated allegations against Russia are especially concerning because they reflect Russia's consistent disregard for international obligations and commitments.
- **Russia's chosen to be a strategic competitor, even to the point of reckless activity. And that's the only thing that it can be called to the innocent people in Salisbury who were exposed to, possibly -- to the potential of being murdered by this. (SD, March 27, 2018)**

(b)(5)

Background/Additional Information

The United States was in touch with our Allies in the United Kingdom ahead of the March 14 announcement. We have full confidence in the UK's investigation and its assessment that Russia was likely responsible for the nerve agent attack that took place in Salisbury last week.

The chemicals in question are understood to be hazardous nerve agents. The use of chemicals as weapons runs counter to all international norms for common decency and respect for human life.

If the Russian Federation is confirmed to be responsible for the nerve agent attack in the United Kingdom, it would be in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Any toxic chemical used to cause death or other harm is a violation of the CWC.

The specific - and repeated - allegations against Russia regarding the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons and now, the UK nerve agent attack, are especially concerning, particularly when considered with Russia's consistent disregard for its international obligations and commitments.

QUAD Statement for reference:

We, the leaders of France, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom, abhor the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, UK, on 4 March 2018. A British police officer who was also exposed in the attack remains seriously ill, and the lives of many innocent British citizens have been threatened. We express our sympathies to them all, and our admiration for the UK police and emergency services for their courageous response.

This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War. It is an assault on UK sovereignty and any such use by a State party is a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and a breach of international law. It threatens the security of us all.

The United Kingdom briefed thoroughly its allies that it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for the attack. We share the UK assessment that there is no plausible alternative explanation, and note that Russia's failure to address the legitimate request by the UK government further underlines its responsibility. We

call on Russia to address all questions related to the attack in Salisbury. Russia should in particular provide full and complete disclosure of the nerve agent programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Our concerns are also heightened against the background of a pattern of earlier irresponsible Russian behaviour. We call on Russia to live up to its responsibilities as a member of the UN Security Council to uphold international peace and security.

Prepared by: (b)(6)